

## CHRISTMAS SPECIAL

### **Handling Angelic Conflict Stress At Christmas, Matthew 1-2 Part II: Handling Angelic Conflict Stress Regarding Institutions (Matthew 2:1-12)**

Introduction: (To show the need . . . )

We face a lot of stress this Christmas Season in dealing with corrupt institutions, much of which is fueled by the angelic conflict, for 1 John 5:19 NIV clarifies that Satan controls the whole world system. We illustrate this:

(1) As for the presidency, a letter by Art Ingram of Seymour in the Sunday Republican, December 5, 2021, told of the problems fueled by "President Biden's administration" with "millions of jobs" going "unfulfilled" and "inflation" being "rampant," the president's "begging OPEC and Russia to export oil to the United States after stopping the Keystone XL pipeline" followed by his "unleash" of oil "supplies from U. S. petroleum reserves" that will "flood the market with sour crude that refiners . . . are shunning" due to its "heavy sulfur content," of "(s)upply chain disruptions" and the president's secret transportation of "thousands of illegals" into "Westchester County" who are being "released into our society . . . with no housing, no jobs, no health care" only to be "supported entirely by the overburdened American taxpayer" topped off by the president's "Afghanistan debacle" that "disgracefully surrendered America's interests to Islamic terrorists." Mr. Seymour summed, "This man is unfit to hold office." (Ibid.)

(2) As for Congress, Veronique de Rugy's column, "Let's make an abdication deal" (Ibid., July 5, 2021, p. 8A) claimed, ". . . (A) dirty little secret in Washington is that Republicans love big-government spending as much as Democrats do. What they disagree on is the way to pay for it. But once they agreed to simply not pay for it, an agreement was pretty quick to reach . . .," with taxpayers left to pay increasing trillions of dollars in the national debt!

(3) As for the U. S. Supreme Court, Kevin D. Williamson ("Roe' v. reality," National Review Online/The Corner, Dec. 2 as cited in "Quotable," Ibid., December 3, 2021, p. 8A) wrote, "What the law *should say* is a question for legislators. The question for judges is what the law *says*. And what the Constitution actually says about abortion is . . . nothing." The Supreme Court has no right to rule on abortion -- it should simply interpret the Constitution!

(4) In religious circles, some in the evangelical Reformed theology camp now reportedly teach that Revelation 12:5 teaches the "woman," Israel gives birth to the Church, not Christ, that Israel there produced the Church so that the Church is there raptured and will "rule" the world "with a rod of iron." This group promotes Replacement theology (like Amillennialism, Postribulationism and Reconstructionism) where the Church replaces Israel!

The big danger with this view is that it tends to foster a hope in a "savior" who is expected to rise to provide **political** leadership and salvage the world and set up a Kingdom much like the antichrist's future deception!

***Need:*** So, we ask, "*How does God want us to handle angelic conflict stress in relating to corrupt institutions?!*"

#### **I. From Revelation 12:1-4, we know that the events surrounding Christ's birth in Matthew 1-2 were heavily affected by Satan's effort to try to destroy Jesus at His birth (as follows):**

- A. The Revelation 12:1-2 "woman with child" who "travailed to give birth" is Israel who suffered to produce the "child," the Messiah Jesus in Revelation 12:5. (Ryrie St. Bible, KJV, 1978, ftns. to Rev. 12:1 and 12:5) [In the conclusion, we will support our interpretation of this "child" opposite what some in the Reformed group do.]
- B. The Revelation 12:3-4 "great red dragon" who tried to kill the "child" is Satan according to Revelation 12:9.

#### **II. Matthew 2:1-8 thus reveals Satan's effort to use leaders in corrupt institutions to destroy Jesus at birth:**

- A. Evidence that government **and religious** institutions were **both** spiritually corrupt is seen in how **all** Jerusalem was troubled by the magis' words (Matthew 2:1-3): King Herod and Israel's religious leaders, the chief priests and scribes, **all** lived for this world so that the Messiah's long-awaited arrival was upsetting for them!
- B. Secular history explains the dynamics of this worldly, troubled reaction of all Jerusalem to the magis' words:
  1. The magi were Persian-Parthian "king makers," and there was a lot of "Roman-Parthian rivalry that prevailed during" Herod's "lifetime," even delaying Herod's rise to power, Z. P. E. B., vol. Four, p. 33-34.
  2. Due to this rivalry, the magi would have entered Roman-held territory with a cavalry escort, Ibid., p. 34.
  3. Also, Herod was an Arab (Ryrie Study Bible., KJV, 1978, ftn. to Matt. 2:1), so news of a Hebrew Messiah being born in Israel would upset him, and and upset Herod would upset worldly Hebrews in Jerusalem!
- C. Learning from Israel's religious leaders that Messiah would be born in Bethlehem, Herod secretly inquired of the magi when the star appeared to discern Messiah's age so as to target Him for later execution, Matt. 2:4-7.
- D. Herod told the magi to go and search diligently in Bethlehem for the young child and bring him word again about His location so Herod could allegedly worship Him, too, Matthew 2:8. Herod's intrigue was great!

**III. The magis' joyful reaction to the star's guidance reveals that they had come with true motives to worship Israel's Messiah, so God led them to find His Son and relate wisely to corrupt authorities, Matt. 2:9-12:**

- A. The magi in good faith had related transparently with the officials in the corrupt institutions, Matthew 2:1-10:
1. They candidly let everyone in Jerusalem know their true motives when they arrived, Matthew 2:1-2.
  2. The magi told king Herod the truth about the time when they saw the star first appear, Matthew 2:7-8.
  3. In good faith, they followed Herod's directive to go to Bethlehem and search diligently for the young Messiah in order to bring him word again as to the Young Child's location, Matthew 2:9a.
- B. Yet, when the Lord revealed Himself to them, the magi sought to fellowship with God, Matthew 2:9b-11:
1. God miraculously moved the star to guide the magi to the Messiah's house, Matthew 2:9b. (Ibid., Ryrie)
  2. Realizing from the star's movement that God was leading them, the magi greatly rejoiced, Matthew 2:10.
  3. Upon entering the house and finding Jesus and His mother, the magi fell down, worshiped Him and gave Him gifts representative of their country in fitting homage to a king -- royal gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh, Matt. 2:11; Alfred Edersheim, The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, 1972, vol. I, p. 214.
- C. God then led the God-fearing magi to separate from Jerusalem's corrupt officials and institutions, Matt. 2:12:
1. The Lord led the magi by way of a dream to avoid returning to Herod, Matthew 2:12a.
  2. In obedience to God, the magi returned to their own country without seeing Herod again, Matthew 2:12b.
  3. They even separated from Herod and the corrupt institutions in Jerusalem, choosing not to return to their own country by heading north by Jerusalem, but to go back home another way, Matthew 2:12c.

**Lesson: *The magi in good faith began to relate to corrupt officials in corrupt institutions, but when God revealed Himself to them, they chose to fellowship with and follow Him over relating to corrupt men in corrupt institutions.***

**Application: (1) *May we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive God's gift of eternal life, John 3:16; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11.* (2) *May we fellowship with God so He can guide us to fellowship with Him and to heed Him instead of fellowshiping with and obeying corrupt officials in corrupt institutions.***

**Conclusion:** (To illustrate the message . . .)

We apply this sermon's lesson to the issues mentioned in our sermon introduction (as follows):

(1) As for the problems in the secular government noted in our introduction, we have often noted from Rev. 3:21 that Christ predicted that we in our era of Church History would face an oppressive Mini-Great Tribulation full of intrigue in rulers! God is allowing such trials to occur to expose the futility of Reformed Replacement belief (and the related theologies of Amillennialism, Postmillennialism and Reconstructionism), for the Church is **not** gaining upright control of the world's nations so as to usher in God's Kingdom on earth, for the world is becoming more evil!

Our task is to expound Scripture (Rev. 7:17; 2 Tim. 4:1-2) to turn people **away from** Replacement theology (and related theologies) and to **hope for** the Pretribulation Rapture followed by Christ's return to set up His Kingdom.

(2) As for the Reformed group's view of Rev. 12:5 [that Israel produced the Church that is then raptured to heaven in that verse] in promoting Replacement theology (and the other related theologies), (a) the "child" in Rev. 12:5 is a "man child" (KJV), the N. T. Greek terms being **huion arsen**, "[a] son, [a] male" in the neuter gender to agree with the neuter antecedent **teknon**, "child" (U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 864; Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 815-816; The Analyt. Grk. Lex. (Zond.), 1972, p. 413, 53), and nowhere else in Scripture is the "Church" viewed as a "male" entity -- only figuratively as the "Bride" of Christ (cf. Rev. 19:7-8; 21:2, 9; 22:17). Even the Greek term for "church" is **ekklesia**, a feminine noun! (Ibid., Arndt & Gingrich, p. 240-241). (b) Also, after the "child" is caught up to heaven in Rev. 12:5, Satan will pursue the "woman" Israel, trying to destroy her in the Great Tribulation (Rev. 12:13-15), but upon failing to destroy her, Satan will try to destroy "her seed," all who come to faith in Christ in the Great Tribulation, Rev. 12:16-17. However, if the Church replaced Israel and is raptured in Rev. 12:5, there would be no need for Satan then to try to destroy the "woman" Israel in Rev. 12:13-15 since she would no longer play a role in God's program! (d) Thus, the Rev. 12:2-5 "child" is **not** the **Church**, but **Christ**, and it is **He** and **not** the **Church** Who ascends to heaven in verse 5! Israel did **not** produce the Church and the Church does **not** replace Israel! (e) We thus interpret Scripture in a consistently literal way and hold to the classic dispensational, premillennial, pretribulational view of prophecy where Israel and the Church are differing and permanent parts of God's program. The Rapture occurs before the Tribulation and Christ returns to earth after it to rule the world.

**May we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive God's gift of eternal life. May we then fellowship with God so He can guide us to obey and fellowship with Him in place of fellowshiping with and obeying corrupt officials in corrupt secular and religious institutions.**